

TESTIMONY OF

RYAN MANNING, PARAEDUCATOR

AFSCME LOCAL "3689" (KILLINGLY PARAEDUCATORS)

HB 6881- AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUS
RELATED TO EDUCATOR COMPENSATION AND PARAEDUCATORS

LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

MARCH 13, 2023

Good Evening, Senator McCorey and Representative Currey and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Ryan Manning and I have been a Paraeducator at Killingly Public Schools for 10 years . I am here to testify in favor of HB 6881- AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUS RELATED TO EDUCATOR COMPENSATION AND PARAEDUCATORS.

We as 10 month employees are not paid enough holidays within a school year. We are only paid 3 holidays, meanwhile all other staff in our building are paid all holidays throughout the school year. I have worked as a paraeducator in Killingly for 10 years and only make \$16.66 an hour. It is false advertising in these job opening ads. It is showing starting pay for a paraeducator of Killingly Public Schools at \$19.04- \$19.88 per hour. In our current contract, you have to work 25 or more years to receive a pay rate of \$19.00 per hour. Many employees from surrounding areas are receiving a cost of living wage due to inflation in our country, but we have no means of keeping up with a cost of living that we could never afford to begin with, even before inflation. How are we supposed to be able to provide for our families and ourselves when all our needs have increased, but yet our pay remains this low? The living wage for an average single person is \$17.76 an hour. That's without a family. Most of us at Killingly don't even make that much at our current pay rate. Just adding a child to the household brings that living wage up to \$37.73. I have two children to support, and a third on the way next month. I have done this job for a long time. I've worked the last 10 years, but before a short hiatus, I worked for six years before that. Meaning, I have worked at Killingly High School for 16 years total. I love my job, working with students, helping shape the future of our community, but I would like to be able to support my family in this position as well. The cost of daycare alone is very high compared to our income.

Another part of this bill that I am in favor of is to allow paraeducators to attend PPT meetings. In our position, we know our students better than most. We know their strengths and weaknesses, things that work, things that don't, etc. We are their main support system and many times their voice. We should be valued enough to be treated equally in this matter. We should also be included in these meetings to better know the expectations of parents/guardians and staff for our students, and how we can better support them.

HB 6881- AN ACT CONCERNING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUS
RELATED TO EDUCATOR COMPENSATION AND PARAEDUCATORS will impact my family and I urge you to support this legislation.

Paraeducators are productive workers in the school community and give a lot of themselves to their students and their families. They work side by side with teachers to provide students with a great education and school experience. However, we also need to take care of ourselves and our own families. We hope to be valued enough as employees to be able to have that be a reality, as employees of Killingly Public Schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

-Ryan Manning